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Senate

The Senate met at 8:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Oh God, our Father, we thank You for all the bright things of life. Help us to see them, to count them, and to remember them even in the midst of perplexing, painful situations. Today, direct our Senators in their work. May they express their gratitude for Your gifts by serving You and our Nation faithfully. Deliver them from the temptation to please others, particularly at the expense of honor, honesty, and truth. Rule over this legislative body for the welfare of the Nation and Your glory.

And, Lord, this week we thank You for the life and legacy of Liz Jeffords. Comfort Senator Jeffords, Leonard and Laura, and all those who grieve her passing.

We pray in the Name of Him who is the resurrection and the life. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 18, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule 1 paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first I ask unanimous consent, and it has been cleared by the minority, that the time spent with the prayer and pledge and my statement not be taken away from the hour on cloture on the two votes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning there will be 60 minutes available to the Members to discuss the issues on which there will be cloture votes on the two motions to proceed. Time is equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. At approximately 9:30 a.m., the Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 3, the prescription drug bill. If cloture is not invoked on that motion, there will be 2 minutes of debate controlled equally by Senators LEAHY and SPECTER, after which time the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 378, the court security bill. If cloture is invoked on that motion, then I

hope the managers can work together for expeditious consideration of this measure. Later I will have more to say about the schedule for the remainder of the week.

STYMIEING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on the first cloture vote dealing with prescription drugs, I think probably I have said enough to indicate my displeasure and disappointment with what has happened this week, for our inability to proceed on something that is so basic to the security of this Nation, the Intelligence authorization bill, which deals with our espionage efforts, our ability to collect intelligence from around the world. That was stopped on a strict party-line vote because the Vice President didn't want that. So that is enough said on that.

On the prescription drug issue, when all else fails I think we should look at common sense. What we are asking is that Medicare be able to negotiate for lower prices in the purchase of drugs for senior citizens. This is opposed by the pharmaceutical industry, the insurance industry, and HMOs because they have a sweetheart deal. They can negotiate for lower prices but Medicare can't.

You can throw around all the statistics you want, it is not going to lower prices. I call upon our common sense. Doesn't it make sense that Medicare should be able to compete with these HMOs and negotiate for lower price drugs? Of course. That is why AARP and dozens of other organizations that care about seniors, not about profits, are on the side of moving forward on this legislation. I hope there will be Senators on the other side of the aisle who will step up and allow us to move forward on this legislation.

Finally, it is hard to comprehend, but in addition to not being able to move forward on the issues relating to intelligence, and probably on prescription drug negotiations, we have been

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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